

Plain English award winner Jargon-free photo magazine

Issue 48

Photography for beginners

LEARN TO SHOOT...

MACRO ON A BUDGET

- ✓ Make the most of basic kit
- ✓ Tricks for sharper shots
- ✓ Create a home studio



**BANISH NOISE
WITH OUR ADVICE**



**OLYMPUS PEN
E-PL7 RATED**



**TAKE BETTER PET
PICS ON A PHONE**

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Introducing the new NX500
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The new NX500 with a 28MP BSI APS-C CMOS sensor
and 4K movie recording capabilities.

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Samsung **NX500**

Learn how
to create
leading lines
on **Page 26**

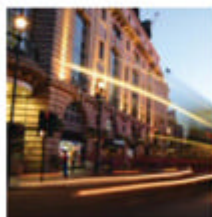
Welcome



3 essential skills you will learn in this issue

01 BUDGET MACRO

Turn to p12 to discover how to shoot macro images without breaking the bank



02 CAPTURE LIGHT TRAILS

Turn to p24 to find out how to create atmospheric light trails



03 DEAL WITH NOISE

On p34 you'll learn pro editing techniques to get rid of colour noise from your images

Macro appeals to many photographers because of the way it enables you to create images that show everyday objects in a completely new light. However, it can sometimes seem bewildering, not least in terms of the kit that you need to begin capturing close-ups. That's why you'll find an in-depth guide to going macro on p12.

Head to p20 for a guide to taking better photos of your pets using your phone, and you can discover how to improve the colours in your landscape images by turning to our editing guide starting on p30. If you're in the market for a new camera, head to our reviews section on p44.

Matt Bennett

Features Editor

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Get in touch with us... Ask questions, leave feedback on the magazine or share your shots via the following social sites...

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Your questions answered and problems solved by our experts

18 Better portraits of kids



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WHAT THE ICONS MEAN...Your quick-start guide to all the icons you might see in Photography for Beginners



Camaphone: Smartphones that are always with you



Compact: Small, low-cost and easy-to-use cameras



DSLR: Usually more expensive, but good image quality



Compact System Camera: Good image quality, lightweight



Shutterspeed: The time your shutter is open for, in seconds

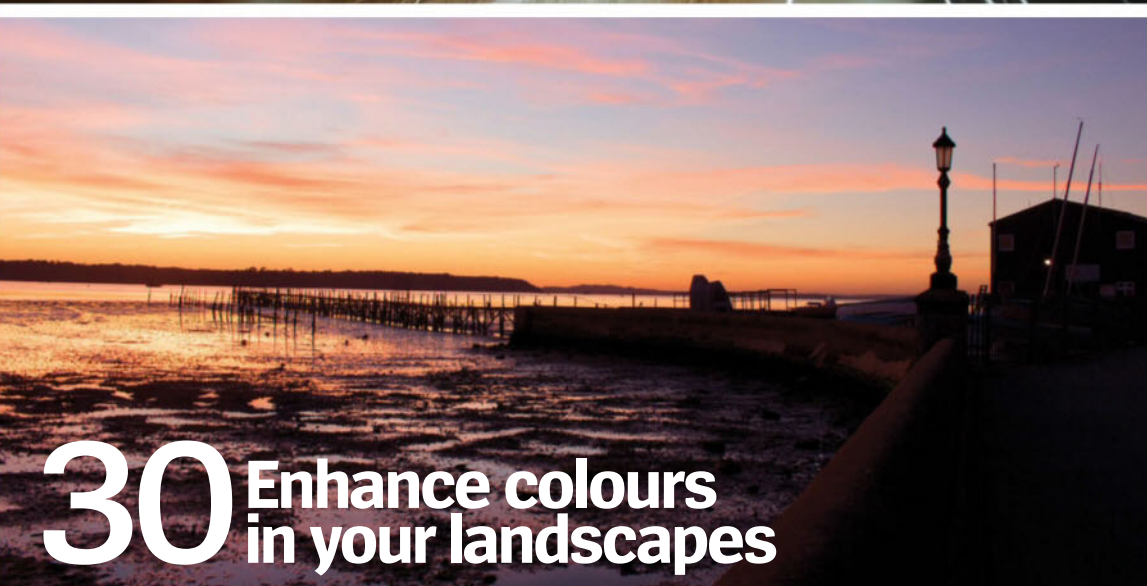


Aperture: The depth of field of an image, as an f-number



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Improve your imagery with this selection of helpful photo accessories

For back issues & more go to...
GreatDigitalMags.com

Share your shots at...
photo4beginners.com
Or search for PFBMag on...



Your photos

Take a look at this month's incredible showcase of stunning images sent in by our readers

WINNER!

Reader: Russ Young



Owl

"I took the shot through a mesh fence waiting until the owl popped its head round the corner from where it was sitting. I was drawn into the eyes and the way it watched me. The photo was taken at Exmoor Zoo in North Devon"

Shot on: Fujifilm Finepix S4200 at 90mm and f5.9, 1/600sec, ISO 400



Reader:
George Law

Pampas Grass

"The pampas grass is about 12-feet tall, possibly taller, and is situated at the back of [our] garden. The quality of light here on the Cotentin Peninsula in Lower Normandy is amazing all year round, particularly in summer. We are lucky in that the strong winds coming off the Atlantic blow cloud formations across the peninsula, creating daily dramatic scenes in the sky."

Shot on: Panasonic LUMIX DMC-FX550
at 4.4mm and f3, 1/640sec and ISO 80

YOUR PHOTOS

Readers' gallery



Reader:
Ann Overhulse

Squirrel

"I love taking natural pictures. Squirrels always fascinated me and every time I go to a park I tend to look for them. This day I happen to noticed this squirrel up in the tree eating a peanut"

Shot on: Sony SLT-A99V with 150-600mm lens at 360mm and f5.6, 1/2000sec, ISO 1250



Reader:
Joseph Parry

Partner In Crime

"This was the first time I'd managed to get outside with my flashes, [and] as an onlooker I'd always wanted to get my hands on a decent camera and some way to control the light. The Yongnuo 560III flashes worked a treat. For this shot we simply slipped off the side of a track in Peasedown St John (near Bath) and shot against the wall of trees next to it!"

Shot on: Canon EOS 700D, 17-50mm lens at 50mm and f5.6, 1/250sec, ISO 100





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Send us your cameraphone shots and you could win a Manfrotto KLYP kit worth £95/approx \$150. For more info head to www.manfrotto.co.uk. Full terms and conditions available online.

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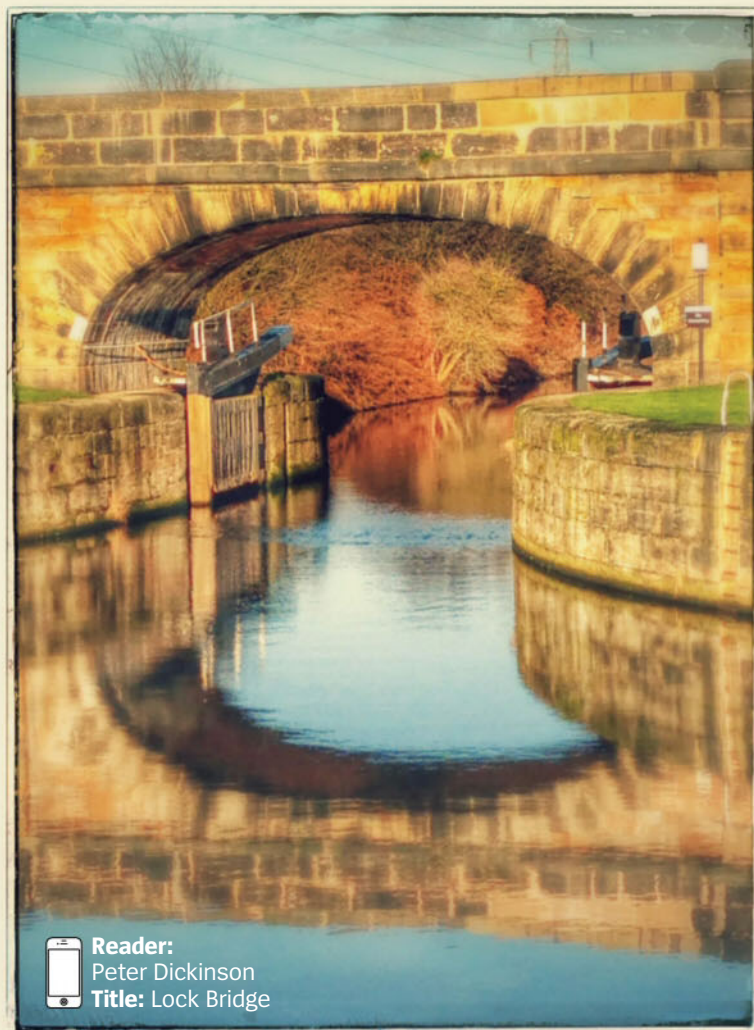
WINNER!

Reader:
Thomas Lennon

River Clyde

"This was taken on a morning in Glasgow on my way to work. The area around the River Clyde has loads of landmarks and this was a great photo opportunity"

Shot on: Samsung
Galaxy S5



Reader:
Peter Dickinson
Title: Lock Bridge



Reader:
Steven Coppard
Title: Spider's web

SHARE YOUR SHOTS

Here's how to show us your stunning snaps

Share on our social sites Join the Facebook, Twitter and Flickr communities

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Search for 'PFBMag' and click the tab. On our page, hit Photo/Video, then Upload Photo/Video. Browse for your image, write a message and click Post for it to appear on our wall!



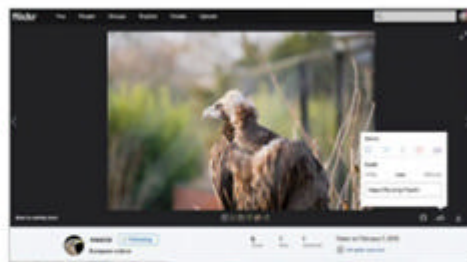
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Click the Compose New Tweet box and select Add An Image. Find your shot and click Open. Write some text, include @PFBMag, then click Tweet and we will see your photo!



PFB Magazine

Hit Upload to add images. Click on the image you want to share, then click Share>Grab the link. Email it to pfbteam@imagine-publishing.co.uk or post it to us on Facebook or Twitter.



Also share on our website Head to www.photoforbeginners.com now

Create a gallery

You can showcase your favourite images by creating your own gallery page on our website. It's quick and simple to set up.

Read free tutorials

There are a wide variety of free guides online. Simply search for a subject here or click on the Tutorials tab to browse.

Be inspired

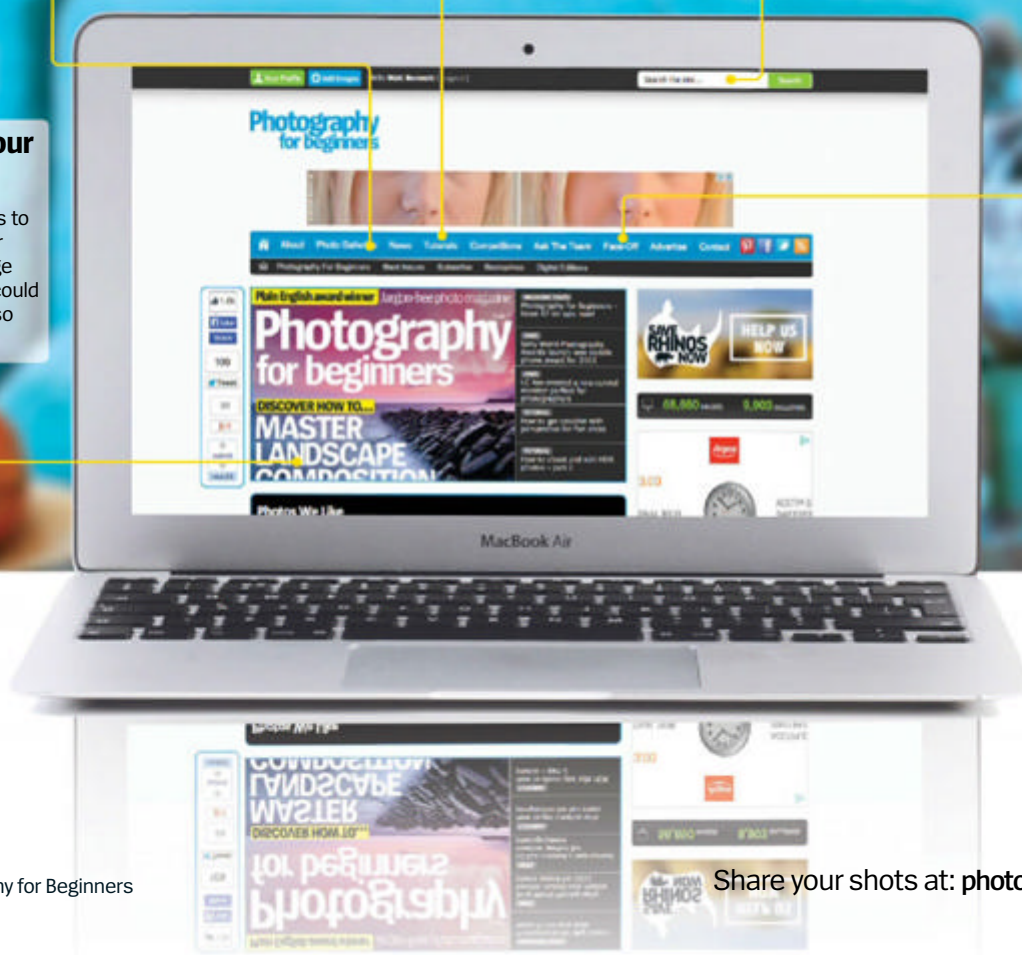
Browse through all the different categories to be inspired by other readers' photos and get ideas of your own.

Become our favourite!

We pick our favourite shots to highlight in our Featured Image section. This could be you soon, so get uploading!

Enter the Face-Off

Your shots are entered into our Face-Off section and pitted against other people's – have fun watching your score rise!



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**Composition counts**

Treat macro photography the same way that you would any other genre and ensure that the background complements the subject. Change your shooting angle or move to get the balance just right.

Discover ways to capture better close-up photos without the need to break the bank

Macro on a budget



GET IN CLOSER

Potential subjects for stunning macro images can be found all around you, both outdoors and at home – and, of course, in your garden. Exploring the world in close up is one of photography's greatest pleasures

TAKE A GOOD LOOK

Macro images can look absolutely beautiful, so it's worth taking the time to overcome some of the initial challenges and problems that most photographers experience at first

Many aspiring photographers feel somewhat nervous about exploring macro photography because they fear that there are too many complicated techniques – and expensive bits of kit involved. It's certainly an area of photography that can seem frustrating, as you try to get your lens to focus on that elusive petal or hovering insect, often with only limited success. There's good news, however, which is that capturing great close-ups isn't as impossible as it can first appear, and you certainly don't have to invest in an expensive DSLR and pricey macro lens in order to get the professional-looking results that you're after.

In order to help you on the way with your close-up

career, over the next few pages we will show you how to use relatively affordable accessories to enable an ordinary lens to focus much closer than you'd ever think was possible. On top of this, you'll also discover how to set up a macro studio at home with a minimum of expense, using items that you're likely to already have lying around your house, and which would otherwise simply end up being thrown away.

If you've been stumped by getting some of the technical aspects right in your macro photography, then you'll be pleased to know that these are also tackled, with expert tips for getting the lighting spot on in your close-up captures.

SHOOTING

Macro on a budget

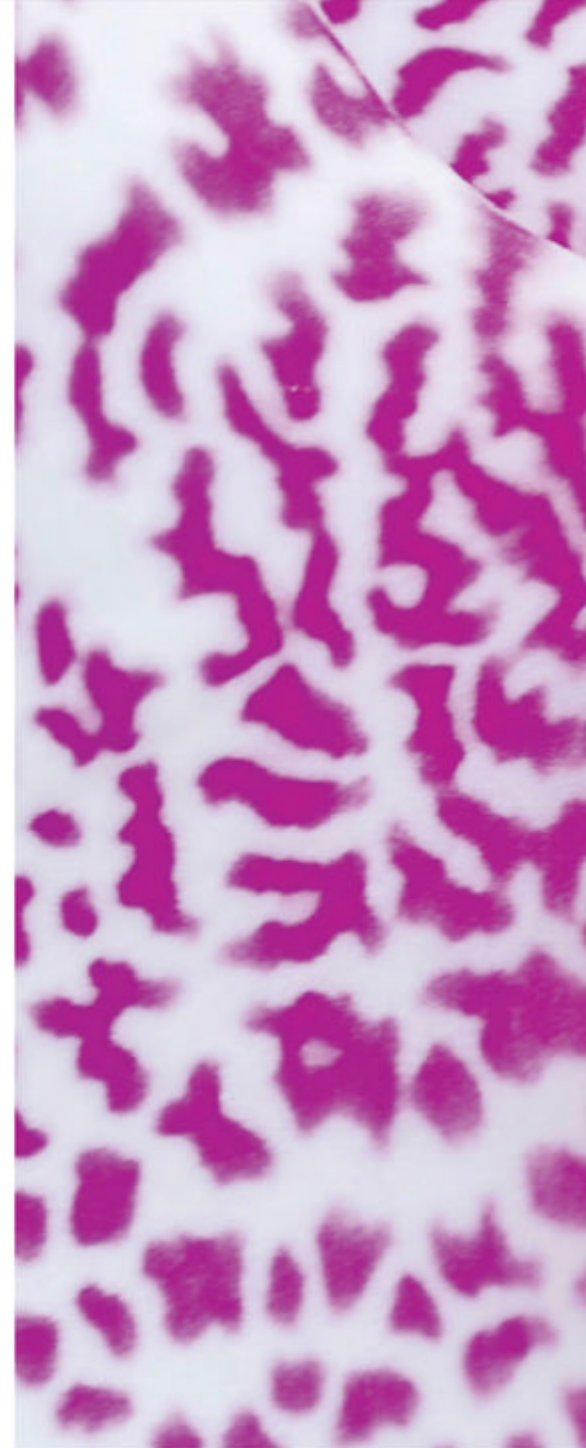
Kit for close-ups

Learn more about affordable alternatives to macro lenses

Specialist macro lenses are a serious investment, so you'll be pleased to know there are cheaper alternatives out there that can help you capture incredible close-ups without breaking the bank. Adapting your existing camera lens with close-up filters, extension tubes or a reverser ring is popular and more affordable option, but they too can vary in price and effectiveness.

Close-up filters simply attach to the end of your lens and essentially magnify the subject, whereas extension tubes are secured between the lens and camera body

so that front element of the lens is positioned closer to your subject. A reversing ring, on the other hand, is one of the cheaper options and it essentially enables you to mount your lens backwards onto the camera so that you can harness its full magnifying power. Both extension tubes and reverser rings, however, disrupt the lens's communication with the camera, so you'll need to be prepared to shoot in manual mode. Find out how to capture an incredible close-up and master manual mode with a reverser ring in the following step-by-step.



Master reverser rings

Flip your lens around for to make the most of macro



1. Attach the reverser ring

Ensure the reverser ring matches the thread size on your lens. Now detach the lens from the camera and screw the reverser ring into place. Line the markings on the reverser ring up with those on your camera's lens mount and slowly lock it into place. If your lens has its own aperture ring, set it to its widest aperture.



2. Select your settings

You'll need to switch to manual, so start by setting your ISO between 400-800, which will enable you to select a faster shutter speed. Check the meter reading to determine how your shutter speed should be set. If the shutter speed is below 1/60sec you'll need to secure the camera onto a tripod to prevent blurry images.

SHOOTING Macro on a budget



DETAILED CLOSE-UPS

With an affordable close-up filter, extension tubes or a reverser ring you'll be able to capture incredible close-ups of any subject using your existing camera lens



Reverser ring

An inexpensive reverser ring enables you to mount your lens backwards onto the camera so that you can shoot extreme close-up shots like this. Just ensure you select a correctly sized ring for your lens and camera make.



3. Light the subject

To capture bold macro shots, ensure your subject is well lit. If you're shooting outdoors or by a window, use a white piece of card or foil as a reflector and angle it towards your subject to bounce more light onto the object. If you decide to use your camera's built-in flash, soften the light by adding a homemade diffuser.



4. Focus and shoot

Ensure the focus setting is set to manual and then compose your image through the camera's viewfinder. To get sharp shots you'll need to rotate the focus ring around the lens until an area of the subject that you want to appear sharp comes clearly into focus – you can then release the shutter to capture your image.

SHOOTING

Macro on a budget

Easy ways to light your macro subjects at home and outdoors

Good lighting is essential for close-up captures as you're focusing on such a minute part of your subject. You don't have to spend hundreds on expensive flash heads or a studio, however, to get great results. In fact, it's easy to create your own setup at home, using everyday household items.

Follow our simple tutorial below and discover how to create your own indoor macro studio in minutes, using a box, some paper and a desk lamp. If you're on the go or shooting outdoors, check out our simple lighting suggestions on the right, and discover quick and affordable ways to illuminate your subjects up close.

Just don't forget to adjust your white balance setting before you shoot however. It's particularly important if you're using incandescent light indoors and want to avoid a ghastly orange glow in your images.

Lighting tricks



BRIGHT AND BOLD

Capture vibrant shots indoors using a desk lamp. You'll need to adjust your camera settings for a good, even exposure if you're using a macro lens or adapter. Alternatively, switch to Macro mode so that the camera takes care of it for you.



STUDIO SETUP



A simple set up is all you need to shoot fantastic macro images indoors. Create your studio space with items found around your home following our simple step-by-step

Set up a home studio space

Create a well-lit studio area for your indoor macro shoots

It can be difficult to photograph indoors, especially when you're attempting to capture close-up shots, where as much light as possible is needed for a good exposure. A great solution is to set up a small home studio space using a few key items found around your home. Follow our steps and create your own budget studio in minutes.



Remove sides

Take a small cardboard box and using scissors, carefully cut out four equal rectangles from its front, top, left and right sides, leaving only the back and bottom of the box intact.



Position diffusing paper

Take three A4 pieces of white paper or tracing paper and secure them with tape to the inside of the box. They should only cover the top, left and right areas that were cut out in the previous step.



SHOOTING

Macro on a budget

Simple lighting solutions

Quick tips to help light your macro subjects on the go



Macro flash diffuser

Take a clean Pringles container and cut a hole near to the back for your camera's pop-up flash to fit inside. Now add white paper to the lid to diffuse the light.



LED lighting

For quick captures on the go, use a small LED torch or even your smartphone's built-in light to help illuminate the area that you're photographing up close.



Handy reflector

Create your own handy silver reflector by sticking tin foil onto white card. You can then use this to bounce light into shadows areas on your subject.



Compact mirror

If you don't have a reflector at hand, a small compact mirror can work just as well. Just be aware that the reflected light won't be as softly diffused.



Secure a backdrop

Place a white or coloured piece of card to back of the box and let it curve down to the bottom. This will act as the backdrop in your image. Avoid creasing the card, else it will look distracting in your images.



Add lighting

You can now position up to three desk lamps around the sides of the box that are covered in paper. The paper will effectively diffuse the light for you, making an ideal indoor studio space.

5 tips for photographing children

Capture precious memories of your little ones as they grow

Kids grow up quickly, so taking photos throughout their childhood will help you preserve the most important yet fleeting moments forever. However, children are notoriously difficult photography subjects, as their patience can run out pretty quickly. Here are some simple tips to ensure you come away with perfect photos every time.

Keep them sharp

It's not easy to get a child to sit still for a photo, and this can lead to blurry shots. Switch to continuous autofocus mode (AI Servo on Canon, AF-C on Nikon) to get your camera to adjust the focus each time they move.

Capture the moment

That perfect moment can be gone in flash, so switch your camera to Burst mode. This takes a series of shots while you hold down the shutter, increasing your chances of capturing the best shot.

Get on their level

For the most natural results, get down low and take your photos from their eye level. Pointing the camera down at them can leave you with distorted shots that will likely just be of the top of their head.

Use the shade

Shooting on a bright, sunny day will often create harsh shadows in your shots and cause your subject to squint at the camera. Move into the shade or indoors for a softer and more even coverage of light.

Make it fun

Children will get bored of just grinning at the camera pretty quickly, so try to make them laugh, invent a game or give them a toy to play with to capture some candid shots with more natural smiles.

“For the most natural results, get down low and take your photographs from their eye-level”

WIN!

SAMSUNG

A Samsung NX3000

Plus three lucky runners-up will each get a
Samsung 16GB EVO SD memory card



The Samsung NX3000 has a premium vintage design that will look stylish in any photographer's hands. With a 20.3MP APS-C sensor it captures amazing detail and vibrant colours. With this kit you can now take the perfect selfie using its 3-inch flip-up display and Wink Shot mode, which will take the shot in two seconds after it detects your wink. It's a helpful and fun option to play with, and you can share your shots via the camera's Wi-Fi option, send albums with MobileLink or tap

another NFC-capable device to transfer shots in an instant. The NFC-enabled Remote Viewfinder will even turn your smartphone into a remote control, letting you step back and adjust settings like shutter speed and aperture. The bundled 16-50mm lens boasts a power zoom option that makes zooming easier and to top off the impressive list of features, you can use the Home Monitor+ app that acts as a baby monitor! To find out more, visit www.samsung.com.

HOW TO ENTER:

Send your name, contact details and your best shot to us by 02 April 2015 with the subject line 'Samsung issue 48 competition'.
Email: pfbteam@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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SHOOTING

Pet shots with your phone



Get great pet shots with your mobile phone

Give your pet pictures punch with these tips and hints for shooting with your mobile phone, then wow your friends online

Above: Fill the frame with the face of your pet to capture their personality, making sure to focus on the eyes – just as you would a human portrait



Get down to the animal's level to get the best perspective, as shooting from above will make them smaller than they are

There's no denying that Instagram, Facebook and the like is awash with cat and dog pictures. Our furry companions make fantastic subjects, but of course, they can be a little trickier to work with and capture in the best possible way.

The good news is that you don't need anything more advanced than your mobile phone to capture your pet's best side. In fact, the small size of the device will allow you to get nice and close without intimidating the animal.

In this tutorial, we'll guide you through some tips for composition, lighting and how to best work with your pet to get the most from them. Soon enough, yours will be standing out from the millions of those images tagged with #catsofinstagram.

If you don't have any of your own pets, you can still put these tips to good use on those

belonging to friends and family – but it's always worth checking with the owner to make sure that they don't mind. Even better if you can get the owner to help with the shot, since they will probably stand a better chance than you of keeping them still enough, or getting their attention to face a certain way.

One thing you will require in abundance before you start is patience. Don't be disheartened if you don't get the shots you want immediately, and be prepared to take a lot of shots that you don't end up using.

It's also worth thinking about where you're going to shoot your pet photos. At home, your pets will probably feel most comfortable, while outside you might get more natural-looking shots. It's completely up to you and there is no right or wrong answer – just have fun!

Find the best light for pet shots

Avoid any strange colour casts in your images by shooting in natural window light

The best kind of light for many types of photography is natural light, and that's also true for pet photography. Daylight will make your pet's fur look most natural. Shooting under artificial light is fine if it's necessary, but you may sometimes find that you're left with unusual colour casts, which can make your pet look a little strange.

If you're photographing at home, try to position the animal near a window. It can be helpful to move something they like, such as a toy or a blanket, near to the window to make them feel comfortable if it's a place they wouldn't normally be.

Try to avoid any times of day when the sunlight is very strong through a

window, as direct, strong sunlight will cast harsh shadows and may make the animal squint. If you're shooting outdoors, an overcast day can be ideal as the light is flat and you avoid casting strong shadows and glare.



Natural light will make your pet look their best, whether that's indoors near a window, or outdoors

Go to your pet's favourite spot

Natural and spontaneous shots occur when an animal feels most comfortable

As the old adage goes, never work with children or animals, and that's with fairly good reason. Animals can be uncooperative at the best of times, but point a camera in their face and some animals seem to instinctively know not to behave in the way you want them to.

If you can capture the animal in their favourite place, where they feel most relaxed, or, perhaps even where they'll pay little to no attention to you, even better. If it's not your pet, ask the owner where they like to sit, and spend a few minutes watching how they behave.

Animals will often be curious about your camera and will come and have a look. Try to distract the animal with treats, sounds or other calls – if it's your pet, you probably already know what these are.



Your pet is likely to feel most comfortable in their favourite place, so photograph them there

SHOOTING

Pet shots with your phone

Useful apps

Top picks to snap your furry friends



Snapseed

Price: **Free** Available on: **iOS & Android**

Make lots of edits to your images, including contrast, saturation, filters and straightening. A good app to use if you're not planning on uploading to Instagram.



BarkCam

Price: **Free**

Available on: **iOS**

This app, dubbed Instagram for Dogs, helps you to get the attention of your pooch with whistles and other noises while you take your shot – filters and editing are also included.



ProCamera 8

Price: **£3.99**

Available on: **iOS**

Take control over your shots with ProCamera 8, which allows you to change things such as exposure, ISO speed and tint. The latest version is designed to work best with iOS 8.

Best settings for pet photography

Alter your phone's settings to get the best from your pet snaps



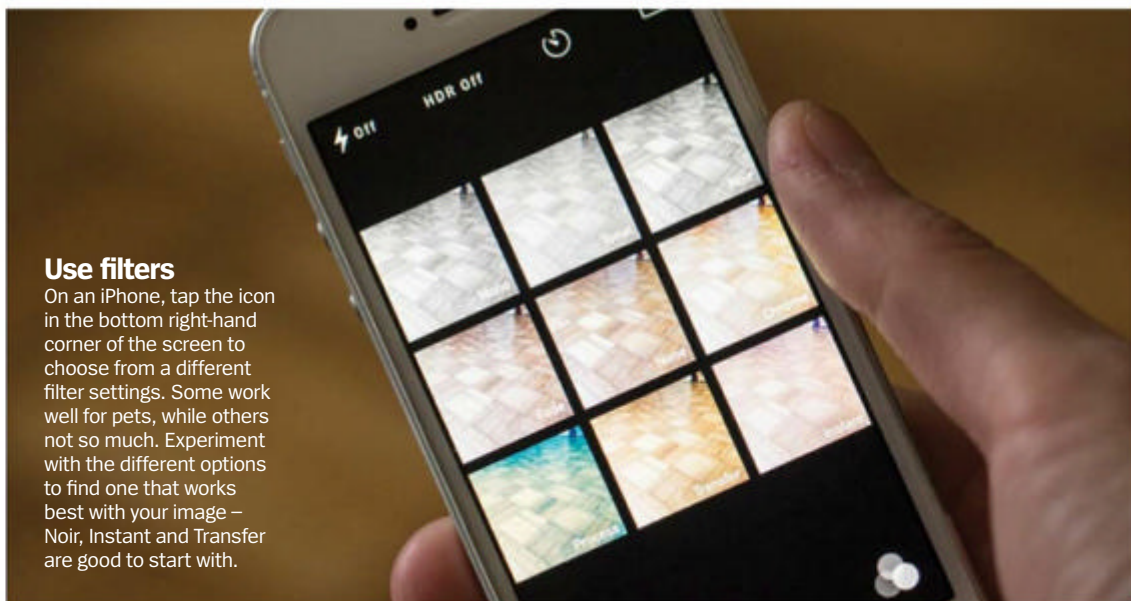
Switch off sounds

Avoid any distractions for your pets by switching to silent mode. Not only do you want the camera to be silent, but you don't want any text messages or alerts to startle them. Being as calm as possible should help your pet to remain likewise.



Continuous shooting to capture movement

Be prepared to waste a lot of shots as you try to capture your pet at its best – hold down the shutter release button to take a number of shots in quick succession and hope that one of them is up to scratch. Pick the best at the end.



Use filters

On an iPhone, tap the icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen to choose from a different filter settings. Some work well for pets, while others not so much. Experiment with the different options to find one that works best with your image – Noir, Instant and Transfer are good to start with.



Aspect ratio

You can shoot with the standard 4:3 aspect ratio, but if it works, switch to a 1:1 square ratio. Instagram shots are always square, so composing with this in mind is better than cropping later.



Timer

Get your pet's attention as the timer counts down – whether that's through whistling, making a noise or offering a treat, the buffer can help. What's more, the phone will shoot a burst of images.



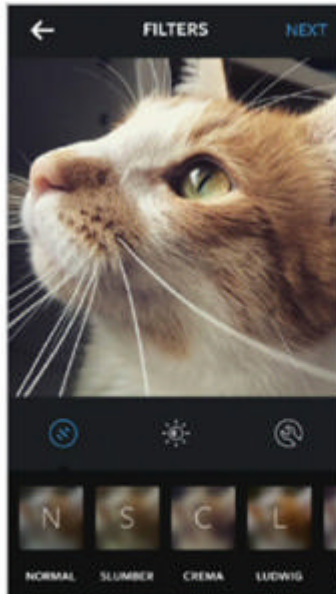
Switch off flash

Not only will using a flash leave you with washed out, unnatural colours, it'll generally startle or upset your pet. It's best to switch it to off completely, rather than leave it on Auto.

Edit and upload your shots with Instagram

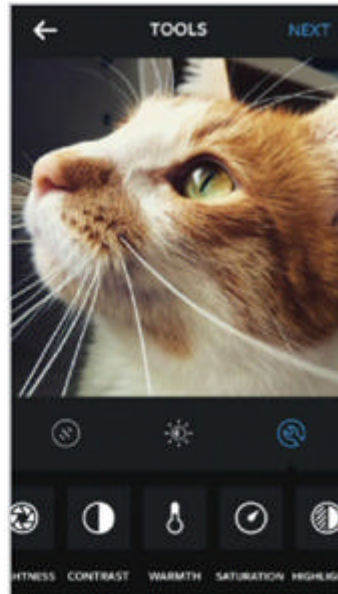
Tweak your photo before you share it with your social media friends

Price: Free Available on: iOS and Android



Choose a filter

01 There's lots of great filters on Instagram that you can choose from. The ones you like best will largely be down to personal taste, but some of the filters will work better for pet shots than others. You can also choose to leave it Normal if you prefer a less edited appearance.



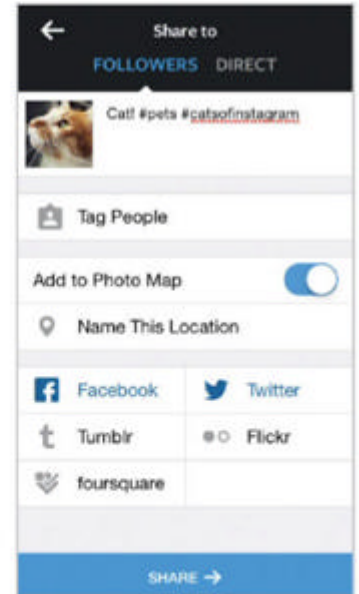
Make edits

02 Use the Tools icon to make other changes, such as increasing brightness, contrast, warmth, saturation and sharpness. You can revert back to the original picture at any time, but it can be useful to boost colours and tones a little with contrast and saturation.



Sharpen shots

03 Sharpening your image can help to bring out fine detail in animal photographs, such as fur or whiskers. Be careful that you don't push it too far otherwise your image will start to look a little unnatural. A good rule is to boost it to around the 30 mark and see how it looks.



Add tags and share

04 To help other people find your pictures, you can tag them with relevant words, such as 'cats', 'dogs', 'pets' and so on. Your image will be uploaded to Instagram, but you can also share directly from the app to other networks, including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

Cameraphone accessories

Take your pet shots to the next level with these useful accessories



Gorillapod Griptight Magnetic

Price: £25/\$15

If you need your hands free to attract your pet's attention, a tripod is a good idea. The one from www.joby.com is ideal as you can attach the tripod to a range of surfaces – useful if you're photographing in an unusual place.



Lastolite 30cm Reflector

Price: £12.50/\$12.95

Handy for directing light towards your subject, but with pet photography it's best if you can rope in a helper to hold the reflector. Silver reflectors add a neutral, slightly cool cast, while gold will reflect warm tones. More info can be found online at www.lastolite.com.



Macro lens

Price: £12/\$20

A macro lens will help you bring out the fine detail in your pet's fur. This accessory available from quirky American store www.photojojo.com slots directly over your phone's in-built camera. You could also try a fish-eye lens for an unusual perspective.



Smartphone Ring Light

Price: £37/\$55

Also from www.photojojo.com is a fun Smartphone Ring Light. While a flash might startle or confuse your pet, a ring light is good way to throw some light onto the subject without it being harsh – and it can make good catchlights in your pet's eyes too.

SHOOTING
Create this shot!

FOCUS FIRST

✓ Your camera might struggle to focus by itself in low light, but switching to manual focus will allow you to give it a helping hand and keep the shot sharp.

DELAY THE SHUTTER

✓ When using slow shutter speeds, simply pressing the shutter release can jog the camera and blur your shot. To avoid this, use a remote shutter release or self-timer mode to shoot hands-free.

CREATE THIS SHOT!

Light trails

Blur traffic headlights for a creative low-light long exposure

CAPTURE ACCURATE COLOURS

✓ Set your camera's white balance mode to Tungsten/Incandescent, as this will keep the car headlights the right colour and prevent any warm or cool casts from spoiling your shot.

SET UP EARLY

✓ Get to your shooting location before it gets dark so that you can see what you're doing while setting up. Then, when the light fades, you'll be ready to take the shot.

STAY SAFE

✓ When choosing a location to shoot from, make sure you stay a safe distance from the traffic. Footbridges over busy roads provide a great safe vantage point.

USE THE LINES

✓ Shoot from an angle so that the light trails guide the viewer through the photo, rather than out of the frame. This will keep them engaged with your composition for longer.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✓ Camera with manual modes
- ✓ Tripod

WE USED...

- ✓ Canon 5D Mark II
- Aperture: f16
- Shutter speed: 2secs
- ISO: 100
- ✓ Manfrotto tripod

YOU COULD USE...

- ✓ Any CSC or DSLR
- ✓ Sturdy surface

SHOOTING

Create this shot!

3 STEPS FOR...

Shooting your own light trail



Set up the camera

Switch to Shutter Priority mode and select a slow shutter speed of around 5-20secs. The slower the speed, the more blur that you'll capture.



Secure your kit

To avoid a shaky, blurred shot, it's absolutely essential that you secure your camera to a tripod or rest it on a sturdy surface.



Keep the ISO low

Your images will be bright enough when using slow shutter speeds, so you can keep the ISO (sensitivity) low to avoid unwanted grain.

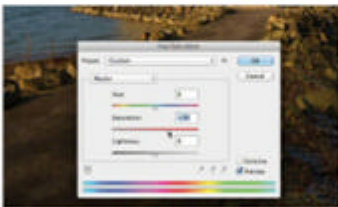
3 OF THE BEST...

Editing tricks for landscapes



Straighten the image

Grab the Crop tool from the tool box, then click the Straighten tool at the top of the screen. Click and drag across the horizon and press Enter.



Boost the colours

Go up to Image>Adjustments and choose Hue/Saturation. Move the Saturation slider to the right to a value of around +30, then click OK to confirm.



Sharpen details

Go up to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask. In the dialog box, set the Amount to 50%, the Radius to 2.0 pixels and leave the Threshold set to 0 Levels.



Enhance landscapes using leading lines

Draw your viewer's focus into your shot using this simple but effective technique

Landscapes are arguably one of the most accessible photographic genres. Head a short distance outside of your town or city and you'll be presented with a wealth of countryside, which is ripe with photographic subjects. There are plenty of easy-to-remember compositional

tricks you can apply, which will allow you to improve your landscape photography, and one of these tricks is called leading lines.

As the name suggests, leading lines are lines that run through an image – usually from the foreground into the background – that lead the

viewer's attention through the image to a main focus point, such as a building. Just about anything can be used to create a leading line within a shot, including fences, hedgerows, and even footpaths. Read on to discover how to use leading lines for landscapes with impact.

Get the shot capture a leading line landscape

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✔ Digital camera
- ✔ Wide-angle lens
- ✔ Tripod

WE USED...

- ✔ Canon 5D Mark III
- ✔ Canon 24-70mm f2.8

YOU COULD USE...

- ✔ Any digital camera



Locate your subject

01 In order for a leading line to work within your image, it must be leading into a suitable subject. This can be just about anything, though buildings or large lone trees tend to work best, providing they aren't surrounded by lots of distracting elements.

Find a leading line

02 The next step is to find a suitable leading line. Just about anything will work, including fences, footpaths, or even a river, just as long as it appears to extend from the foreground out towards your subject.



Set up on a tripod

03 When shooting landscapes, it's a good idea to secure your camera to a sturdy tripod, as this will cause you to slow down the pace of shooting so you can really concentrate on the overall composition.



Use Aperture Priority

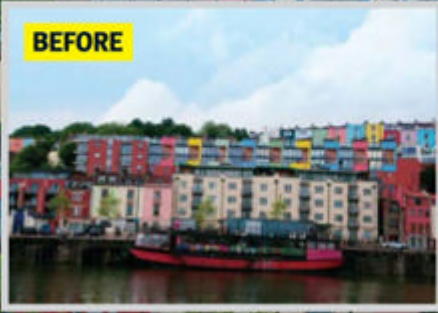
04 Switch the camera over to Aperture Priority (A or Av on the mode dial) and set a narrow aperture of around f11. This will ensure that your image is sharp from front to back, giving the leading line its full effect.



Frame up and shoot

05 Looking through your viewfinder and compose your shot so that it appears that the leading line is directing up towards your subject. Set the focus and take the shot by fully depressing the shutter button.

BEFORE



AFTER

Straighten out wonky horizons with the Ruler tool in Photoshop or the Straighten tool in Elements



Straighten horizons

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✓ Start image
- ✓ Editing software

WE USED...

- ✓ Photoshop CS5

YOU COULD USE...

- ✓ Photoshop CS5/CC
- ✓ Elements
- ✓ GIMP

Learn how to correct wonky horizons in either Photoshop or Elements

Correcting wonky horizons in post-production can be time consuming, and even costly to an image. Straightening a photo inevitably results in cropping out some part of the picture, which is why it's always best to get it right in camera. Activating the grid within your camera's menu interface will help, as you'll be able to position

the horizon accurately across one of the three horizontal lines that appear on the back LCD screen. The grid itself can also assist you when it comes to following some of the key composition rules, like the rule of thirds.

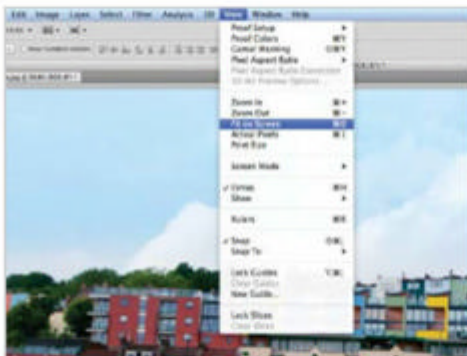
Existing images that are askew, however, can be corrected easily in almost any editing software. All

come with a dedicated tool to crop these days and some even offer a more specific tool for straightening.

In this three-step tutorial, we'll show you how to correct crooked horizons in Photoshop with the Ruler tool. If you're using Elements, simply select the Straighten tool that's located within the tool bar and follow the same steps below.

Straighten up shots

How to use the Ruler tool in Photoshop



Select the ruler

01 Open your start image in Photoshop and ensure it fills the entire screen via View>Fit On Screen. In the toolbar on the right, click and hold down on the eyedropper icon that's positioned next to the Crop tool.



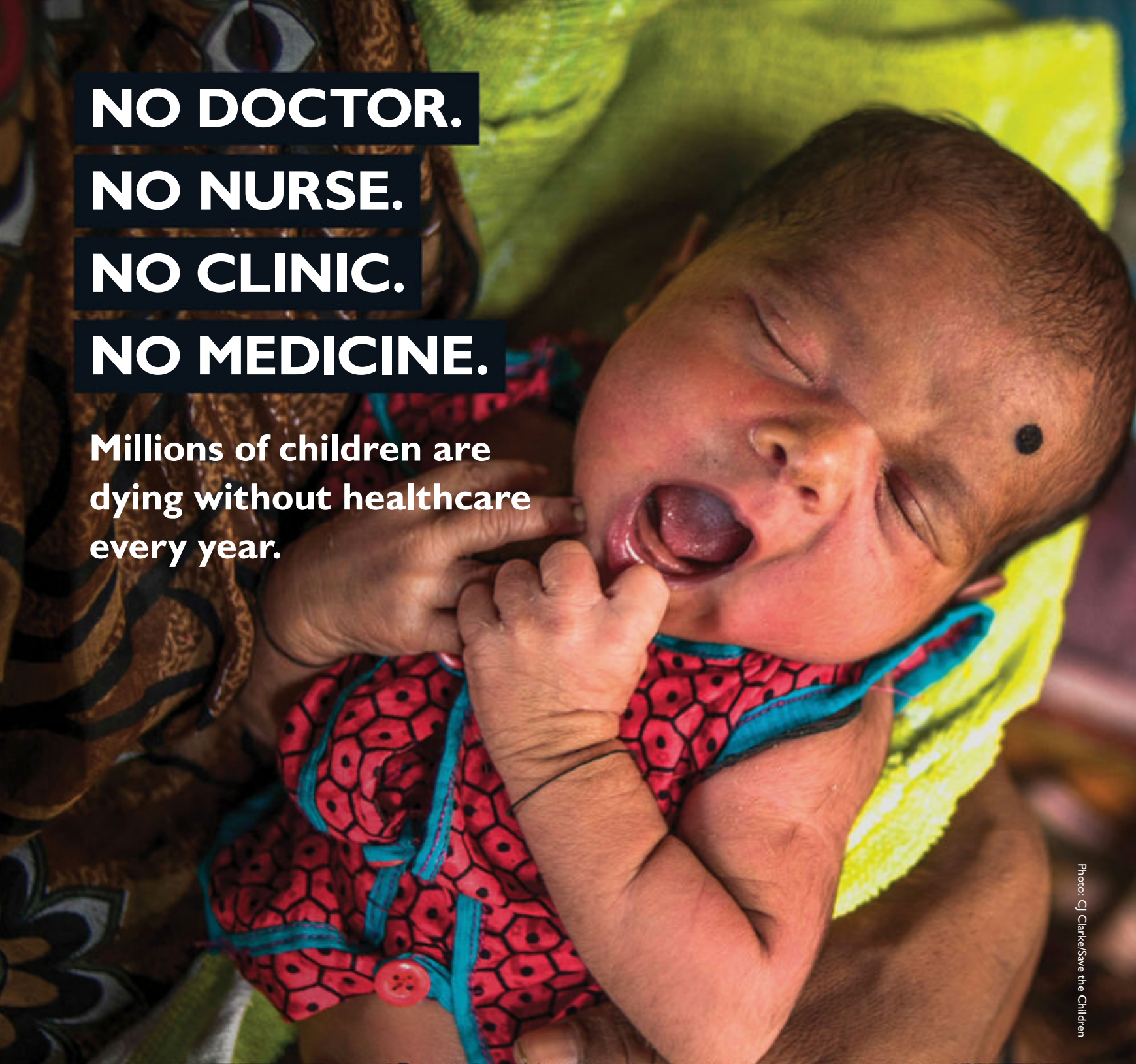
Line up the horizon

02 From the dropdown menu select the Ruler tool. Now zoom into your image and click to place an anchor point at one end of the horizon. Hold this down and drag a straight line over to the other end.



Straighten the shot

03 Ensure the line sits straight across the horizon and adjust its position if necessary. Now zoom out and click the Straighten tab that is positioned along the top bar. The image should now appear straight.



NO DOCTOR.

NO NURSE.

NO CLINIC.

NO MEDICINE.

Millions of children are
dying without healthcare
every year.

Photo: CJ Clarke/Save the Children

We **CAN** change this.

Find out more at photoforbeginners.com/wake-up-call

NO CHILD
BORN TO DIE



Save the Children

Registered charity England and Wales (213890) Scotland (SC039570)

EDITING

Enhance colour in your landscapes

Enhance colour in your landscapes with Elements

Discover how to make your vistas more vibrant with quick adjustments in Elements

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

✓ Editing software

WE USED...

✓ Elements 11

YOU COULD USE...

✓ Elements 10/12/13

✓ Photoshop

Tools palette

Use tools in the Tools palette to help you make a selection of a subject or even add a colour gradient

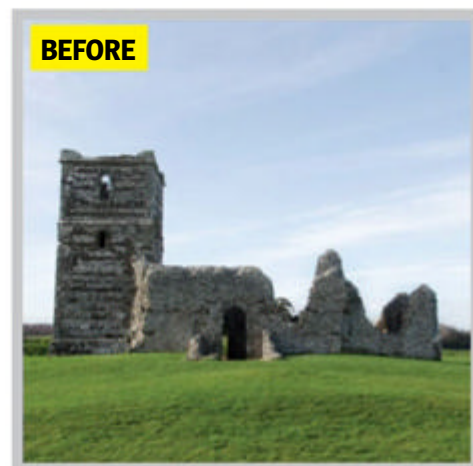
Expert mode

Take more control over your colour enhancements in Expert mode. Here you can make adjustments using tools found in the Enhance menu

Layers palette

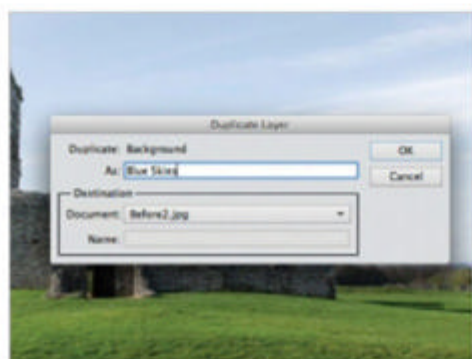
In Expert mode, add new layers that you can make adjustments to in the Layers palette. This will enable you to protect your original image should you want to remove a recently added effect





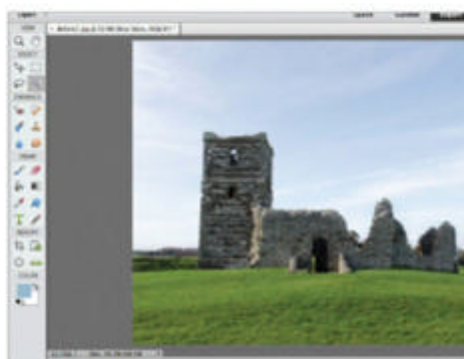
Boost blue skies

Use gradients to enhance flat skies in your landscape shots



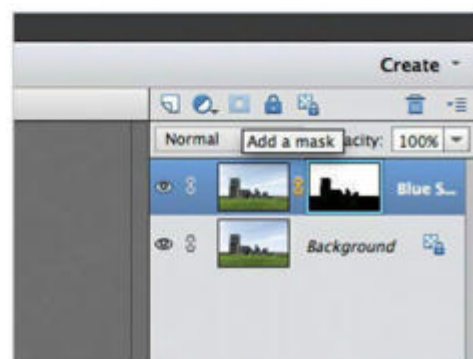
Create a new layer

01 Load the image you want to enhance in Elements via File>Open. Select the Expert mode along the top and click on the Layers icon to open the layers palette. Ctrl/ right-click on the Background Layer in the layers palette and select Duplicate Layer.



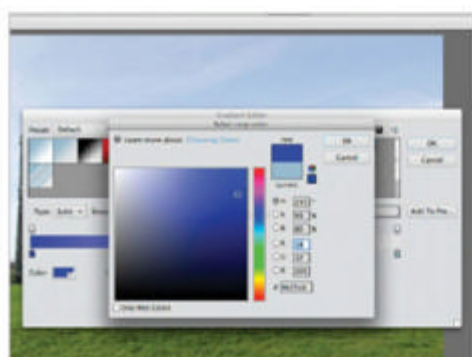
Make a selection

02 Click on the new layer in the palette and select the Quick Selection tool. Increase the brush size at the bottom and then brush over the sky to select it. To add more areas of sky to the selection, click on the Add To Selection icon at the bottom.



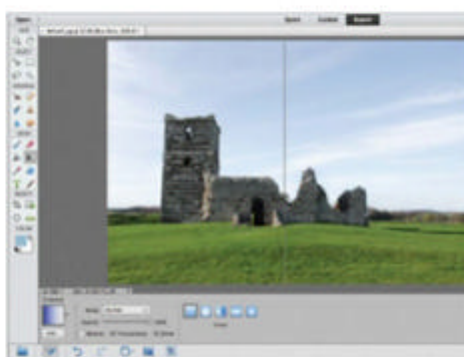
Add a layer mask

03 Once a selection has been made of the sky, click on the Add Layer Mask icon. A white box with a black silhouette of the landscape should appear next to your new layer. This will help protect the landscape from being affected by adjustments you make.



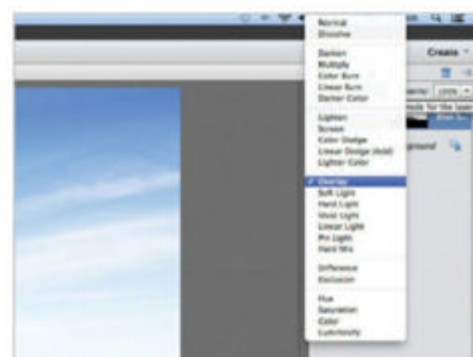
Customise gradient

04 Ensure the layer and not the mask is selected and then click on the Gradient tool. Click to edit gradients at the bottom and once the dialog box appears, use the Foreground to Transparent preset. Change the colour by picking one at the bottom.



Add a blue sky

05 Pick a dark-blue hue from the Select Stop Color box and click OK. Ensure Linear Gradient is selected and Opacity is 100%. Position your marker at the top of the image in the middle and drag a straight line down. As you let go, a gradient should appear.



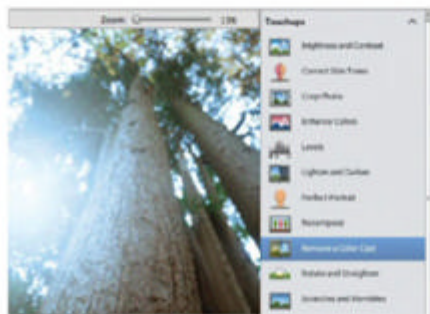
Blend the results

06 To blend the gradient into the image, click Normal at the top of the layer palette and then select Overlay from the menu. If it still appears too dark, adjust the Opacity at the top of the Layers palette. Once you're happy, go to Layer>Flatten Image.

EDITING

Enhance colour in your landscapes

Remove bright colour casts



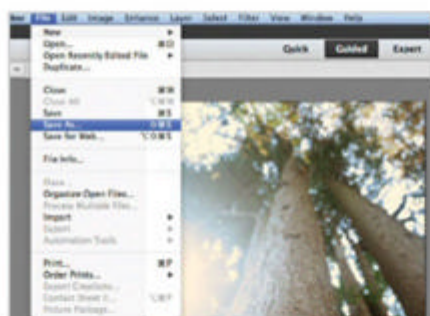
Select Guided mode

01 You can remove unwanted colour casts quickly using the Guided mode in Elements. Start by opening your image and then select Guided mode at the top. Now click on Remove A Color Cast on the left-hand side of the screen.



Make a selection

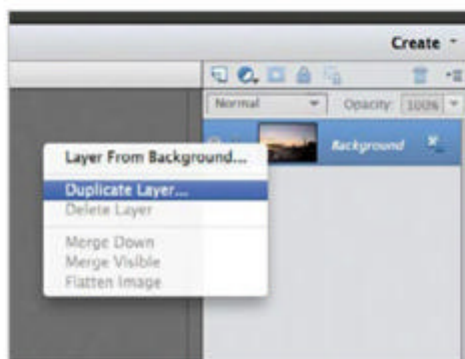
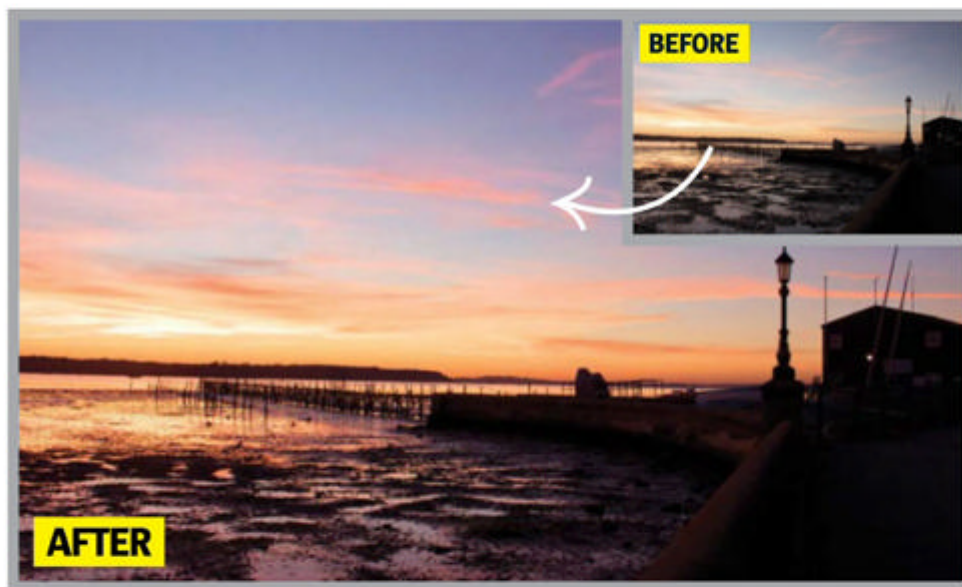
02 Click on the Color Cast Selection tool on the left and position the eyedropper over a part of the image that should appear either white, grey or black. Elements will then automatically remove the colour cast for you.



Remove colour cast

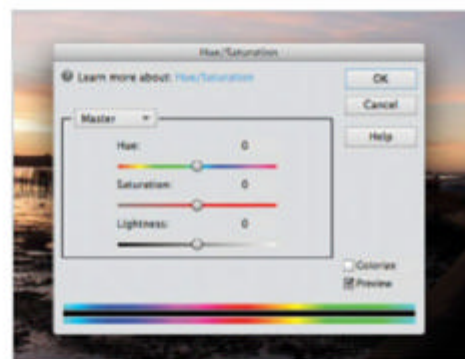
03 If the results aren't quite right or don't look effective, click on the Reset Panel in the top right and try again. Once you're happy with the result, click Done and then save your colour-cast-free image via File>Save As.

Enhance sunsets Enrich golden-hour colours



Duplicate the layer

01 Load your start image in Elements and ensure Expert mode is selected. Open the layers palette by clicking on the Layers icon at the bottom and then Ctrl/right-click on your Background layer and select Duplicate.



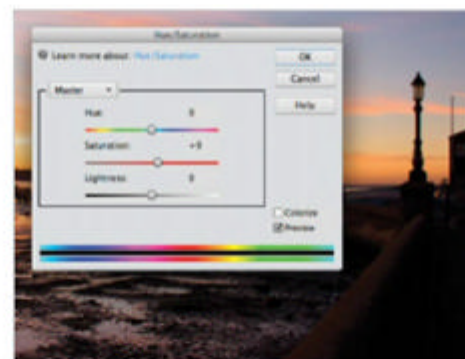
Select Hue/Saturation

02 To enhance existing colours go to Enhance at the top and select Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation. Once the dialog box appears, click on the preview icon so you can review each adjustment you make.



Enhance colours

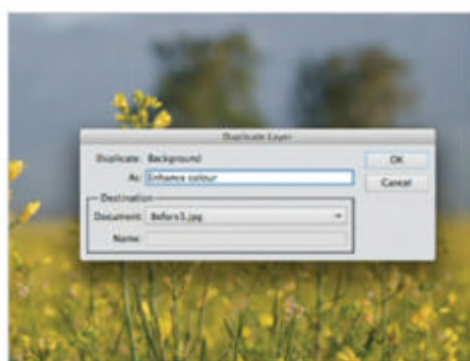
03 Click on Master and select Red from the menu. Slowly drag the Saturation slider to the right to increase the saturation of the red hues in the image. Adjust other colours by changing the selection in the menu.



Boost saturation

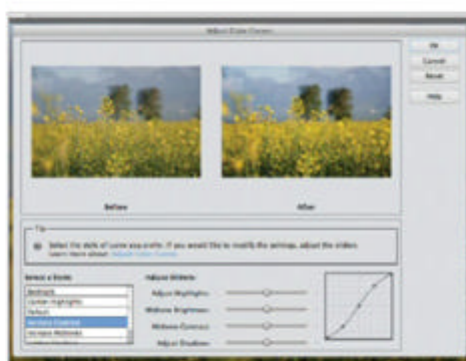
04 Avoid oversaturating each colour as you can end up with a patchy result. Add a quick boost to the entire image at the end by selecting Master and increasing the saturation ever so slightly.

Improve tones Boost colour contrast with Curves



Create new layer

01 Ensure Element's Expert mode is selected and then open your start image. In the layers palette, Ctrl/right-click on the Background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Click on the duplicate to activate it.



Select Color Curves

02 Go to Enhance and select Adjust Color>Adjust Color Curves. Once the dialog box opens, select Increase Contrast from the Select A Style menu. This will automatically enhance contrast in your image.



Enhance highlights

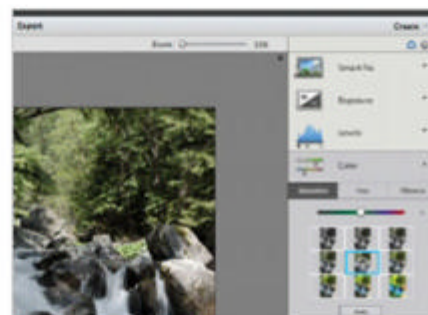
03 Pull the Adjust Highlights slider to the right in order to brighten lighter colours in the image. You can then enhance the brightness and contrast in the Midtones by moving those sliders over to the right as well.



Boost contrast

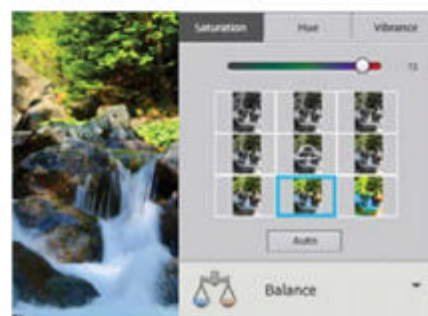
04 To increase contrast further, darken the shadows by dragging the Adjust Shadows slider to the left. Continue adjusting the sliders until you're pleased with the result and then click OK. Now save your image.

Give shots a colour boost



Select Quick mode

01 Give colours a boost by opening your landscape in Elements and selecting Quick mode at the top. Now select Color on the right-hand side of the screen. A split screen before and after of your image should appear.



Enhance saturation

02 Select the Saturation tab under Color and move the cursor over the grid options below. Now select one that subtly enhances saturation. See the before and after to check results or click Reset Panel at the top to start again.



Increase vibrancy

03 Now select the Vibrance tab under Color and choose one of the grid options to really help the colours pop. You can move the slider at the top to adjust the intensity. Finally save your image via File>Save As.

EDITING

Reduce noise in your indoor shots

Reduce noise in your indoor shots

Discover how to soften the effects of noise in your photos using the Reduce Noise filter in Photoshop and Elements

five
minute
project

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✓ Start image with noise
- ✓ Photo-editing software

WE USED...

- ✓ Photoshop CS5

YOU COULD USE...

- ✓ Elements
- ✓ Photoshop CS/CC
- ✓ GIMP



Use a low ISO

Prevent noisy shots in future by setting a lower ISO in camera. Adjust your aperture, shutter speed or use flash to brighten up an image in low light instead.

AFTER



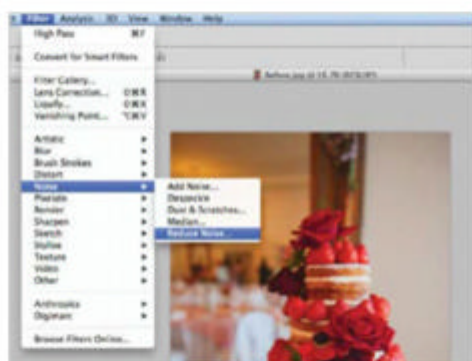
Noise has a way of creeping into photos, sometimes when you least expect it. It won't always be immediately apparent in camera either, but up close on a computer screen you'll soon recognise its gritty characteristic, especially in the shadow areas of your shots. It's not only distracting, but noise can also reduce the level of detail in your captures, which ends up meaning that you'll struggle to get good-quality prints.

Luckily there are ways to reduce the appearance of noise in your images using dedicated tools within the likes of Photoshop and Elements. To find out how to lessen the impact of noise in your photos, follow the six simple steps we've outlined below, in either software program. You'll discover how to remove both colour and luminance noise, as

well as preserve details, using the specialist Reduce Noise filter. Although a powerful tool, it's important to note that it won't eradicate noise completely from your captures. With the right level of adjustments, however, you will be able to soften its appearance considerably within a matter of minutes. We'll even show you how to bring clarity back into your shots after using the Unsharp Mask tool.

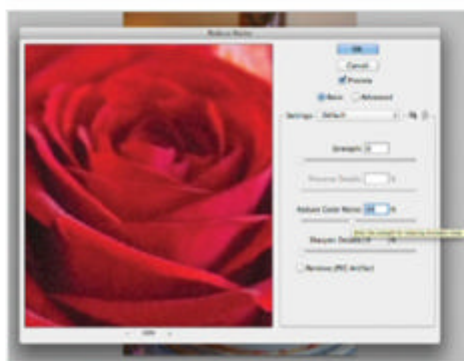
In order to avoid overly noisy shots in future, ensure your camera's ISO setting remains low on a shoot. High ISOs introduce noise as they are designed to increase the camera's sensitivity to light, essentially enabling you to capture brighter images in dark conditions. Use wider apertures or slower shutter speeds instead, particularly when you're dealing with low light indoors or outside.

Reduce noise Lessen the effects of noise in under five minutes



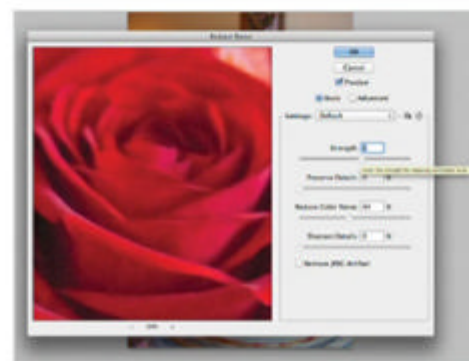
Reduce Noise filter

01 Open your noisy image, then go to Filter at the top of the interface and select Noise>Reduce Noise from the menu. Once the dialog box opens, ensure you have the Preview box ticked to see each adjustment.



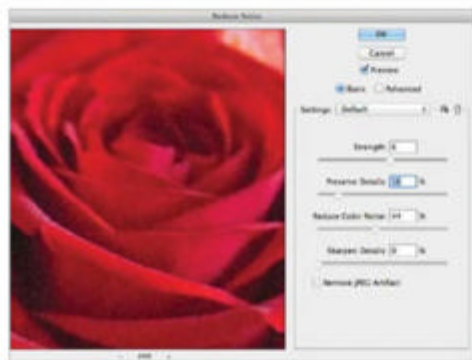
Remove colour noise

02 Zoom into the image in the Preview Image box and set all the sliders to 0. Start by reducing colour noise by dragging the Color Noise slider to the right. Any obvious red, green or blue dots should start to blend in.



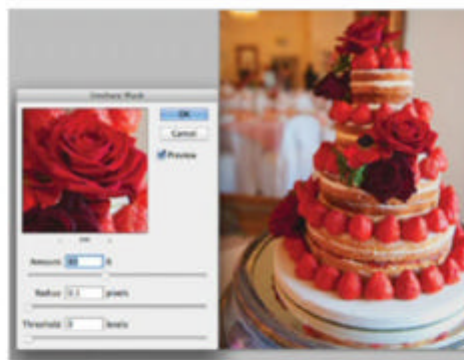
Increase strength

03 Tackle luminance noise using the Strength and Preserve Details sliders. Start by increasing the Strength, which will soften the appearance of the noise, but avoid high settings because details will begin to blur.



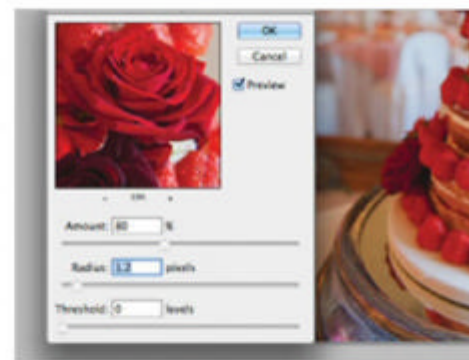
Preserve details

04 To rescue some of the detail, drag the Preserve Details slider to the right. Keep the percentage low, as you don't want to reintroduce noise. Click and hold in the Preview Image box to see the results.



Select Unsharp Mask

05 Make more tweaks to the sliders if necessary then click OK. You can now sharpen your image with the Unsharp Mask tool via Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask. Start by slowly increasing the Amount slider to 80%.



Sharpen edges

06 Carefully increase the Radius slider to around 1.2px to ensure the edges within the image are sharpened. Keep the Threshold slider at 0 and click on the Preview box to review results before you hit OK.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✓ A landscape, animal or portrait photo
- ✓ Computer
- ✓ Internet connection

WE USED...

- ✓ Mac
- ✓ PaintMeAPresent.com

YOU COULD USE...

- ✓ PC
- ✓ PaintYourLife.com
- ✓ Brushstroke app

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN...

- ✓ How to order a painted version of one of your photos

Turn your photo into a work of art

Commission a professional artist to re-create your shot with Paint Me A Present

A stunning photo can look great in paint or pen as well as pixels, providing a great source of inspiration for a more traditional work of art. If you know your way around a brush and palette, then why not have a go at copying your favourite photo onto canvas yourself? It will give you the perfect starting point to work from, and you can give it your own unique twist.

However, if you'd rather stick to using a digital camera, you can still see what your shots would look like in acrylic or oil. Paint Me A Present is a

website that enables you to commission artists to re-create your photographs in a number of styles. You could order a painting of a cherished image to hang on your wall at home, or create a personalised piece of artwork to give to a loved one as a special gift. Prices start from around £40 with a range of different sizes to choose from for your artwork. You can also choose for it to arrive in a frame or on a ready-to-hang canvas. It is very easy to order your painting – just follow our simple step-by-step guide to find out how.

Review it

See what other Paint Me A Present customers made of their paintings by clicking the Testimonials tab

Spice it up

There are over 20 different artists to choose from, each with their own unique style and price point

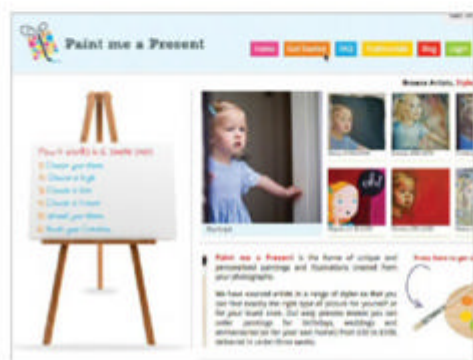
Do it yourself

If you're good with a paintbrush as well as a camera, then you can become a Paint Me A Present artist



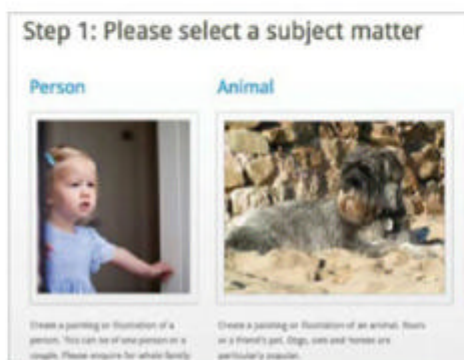
Order a painting

Get personalised artwork delivered straight to your door



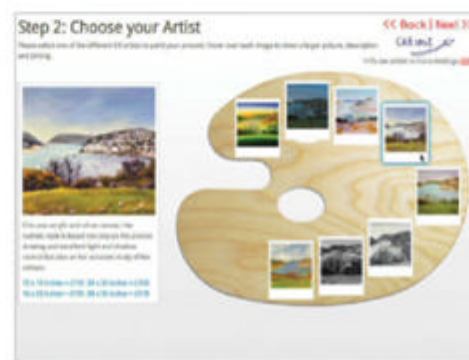
Get started

01 Open your web browser and type in www.uk.paintmeapresent.com into the address bar. On the home page you can browse the artists, styles and prices, then click 'Get Started' when you're ready.



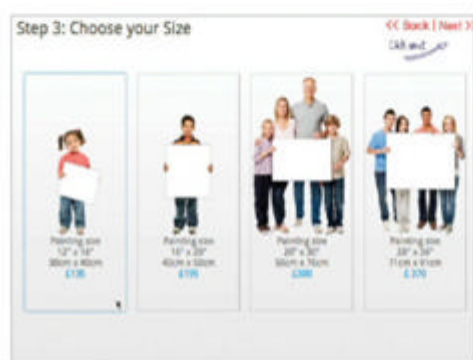
Select a style

02 You will be asked to choose which type of photo you would like painted. The only options available are portrait, animal and landscape, but group and architecture shots come under these headings too. Click Next.



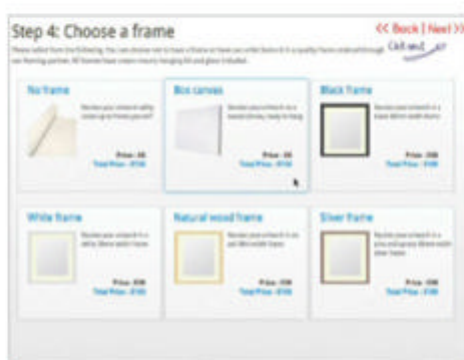
Choose an artist

03 Now it's time to choose which artist you would like to paint your photo. Each artist has their own style, from realistic to impressionist, and monochrome to pastel colours, as well as their own prices.



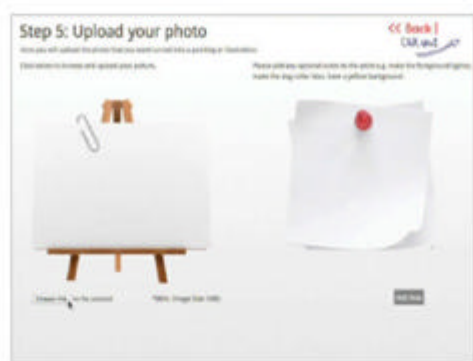
Pick a size

04 There are four size options to choose from for your painting, right up to a 28 inches by 36 inches (71cm x 91cm) piece of artwork. Make sure you pick a size that will work well on yours or your friend's wall.



Select a frame

05 If you would like your painting to arrive already framed, then there are four styles to choose from. Alternatively, you could get it painted directly onto canvas or buy it as it is and frame it yourself.



Upload your photo

06 Now it's time to upload the photo you would like to be painted. If you would like anything to be changed for the painted version, such as the background colour, then you can add a note for the artist.



Order your painting

07 If you already have a Paint Me A Present account, then you can sign in and order your painting. If not, set up an account and enter your payment details. Your painting should then arrive within three weeks.

3 OF THE BEST...

Apps to add arty effects



Brushstroke

Price: £2.29/\$2.99 Available on: iOS
Instantly convert your photo into a beautiful painting with one tap, then get it printed onto high-quality canvas and delivered to your door.



Waterlogue

Price: £2.29/\$2.99 Available on: iOS
Transform your photo with 14 different preset watercolour effects and control the wetness, pen outlines and colour for a customised look.

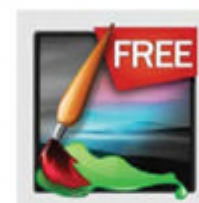


Photo Painter Free

Price: Free Available on: Android
Choose from several painting styles, including realist and impressionist, apply textures, and paint or doodle over your shots with just a finger.

SHARING

Build slideshows in Lightroom

Build slideshows in Lightroom

Use the Slideshow module in Lightroom 5 to display your photos in a sleek but simple way

Slideshows are a great way to showcase your photos in an engaging and exciting way, especially if you want to show friends the story of a trip. If you are using Lightroom, you can create a slideshow directly in the software! It's very easy to use, with customisation tools for sleek and sophisticated slideshows.

While you can't add in different effects and transitions like you can with dedicated slideshow editors, if you're looking for a seamless video of your pictures, Lightroom is ideal. There are

templates to get you started, but you may want to customise these for more impact. To create a narrative, you can even choose to add text, ratings, watermarks and more to your images. The photos are displayed on a backdrop, which can be left plain if you prefer, or you can fill your images to fit the screen as they're displayed.

You can also add in a music track – simply head to the Playback menu and tick the Audio button, then browse to a track you want to use. The slideshow can be timed to finish with your music.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

- ✓ A collection of photos
- ✓ A music track (optional)

WE USED...

- ✓ Lightroom 5

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN...

- ✓ How to build a simple slideshow
- ✓ How to export it as a video file
- ✓ How to add text and watermarks



Preset options

There are a few templates to get you started, and you can save your own too

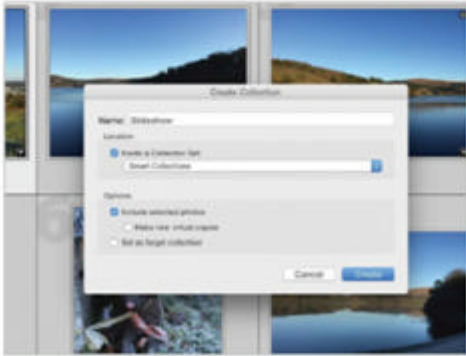
Make it yours

This panel has all of the tools you can use to customise your slideshow

Add extras

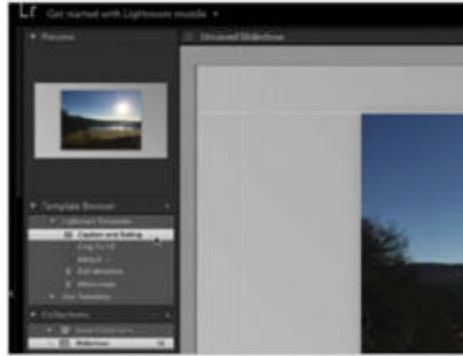
This ABC button lets you add information to your slides, such as shooting settings and captions

Build your first slideshow



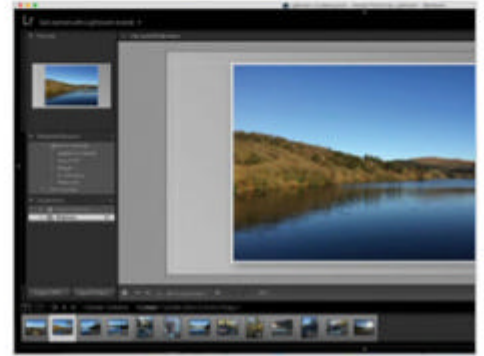
Start a Collection

01 In your Library module, select all the photos you want in your slideshow. Next, go to Collections and click the ‘+’ to add a new one; call it something like ‘Slideshow images’. Head into the Slideshow module.



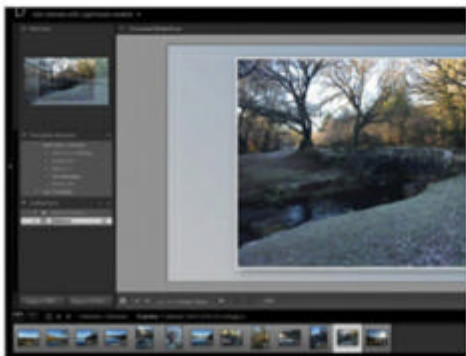
Choose a template

02 Your images from the Collection will automatically load. Go to the Lightroom Templates to start with and pick the one closest to what you would like. You can then start to customise it to suit your needs.



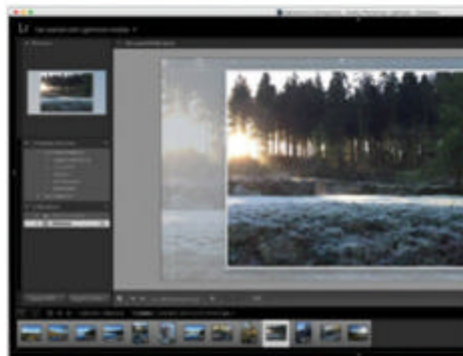
Setting image size

03 You can drag on the image directly to make it bigger or smaller. If you select Stroke Border, you can add a frame to your images, changing the size with the slider. Your changes are applied to every slide.



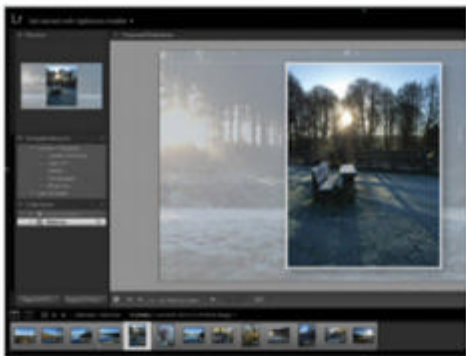
Change the colours

04 You can double-click the colour square to change the colour of the border. In the same way, you can go to the Backdrop menu and click to change the colour of the background to the slides.



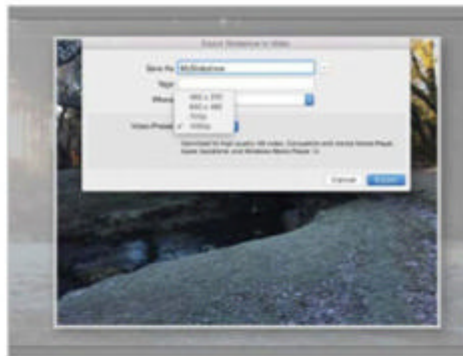
Background image

05 You don't have to have a plain backdrop colour – if you like, you can also drag and drop any photo into the background of the slides as well, changing the Opacity to suit using the slider in the Backdrop menu.



Playback settings

06 In Playback, choose how long you want each image to be on screen and how long the transition will be. Select Random Order if you want Lightroom to pick the order, or untick to arrange the images yourself.



Export options

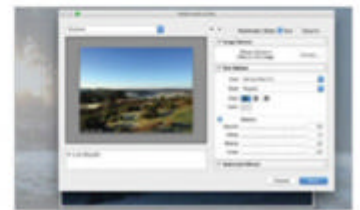
07 There are two Export options. You can generate a simple PDF to share with people, but if you want motion (and audio) then you can export as an MP4 video file at any resolution, from mobile-optimised to HD.

3 OF THE BEST... Slideshow overlays



Captions

Under the main preview window is a menu that lets you add text overlays. If you pick 'Custom text' you can add captions to your slides.



Watermark

The Watermark menu lets you add a custom copyright line to your slides in case you want to ensure your images are protected.



Intro slide

You can use the Titles menu to add a slide at the start (or the end) of your slideshow and customise the text and colours.

ask the team



Ask the team questions at
photoforbeginners.com



Post questions to the PFBMag
group at www.facebook.com



Tweet any quick questions or tips you
may have to @PFBMag



Upload your problem pics to our Flickr
pool at www.flickr.com/pfbmag

**Questions & answers,
tips & photo-fixes**

Can you help me edit my self-portrait?

I've been practising my portrait photography skills by taking photos of myself and I love experimenting with different backdrops to get some really bright, colourful shots. I would now like to try editing them, but where should I start?

Rebecca Jones, Facebook

Colourful yet simple backdrops are great for producing clutter-free portraits, as the last thing you want to do is distract attention away from the main subject. We love this smiley close-up shot, but like most portraits, it can definitely benefit from a bit of editing. There are lots of tricks you can use to enhance a portrait, but most programs have simple tools for basic quick fixes.

 **Photo needs rescuing?**
Email it to our experts
pfbteam@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Blurry eyes

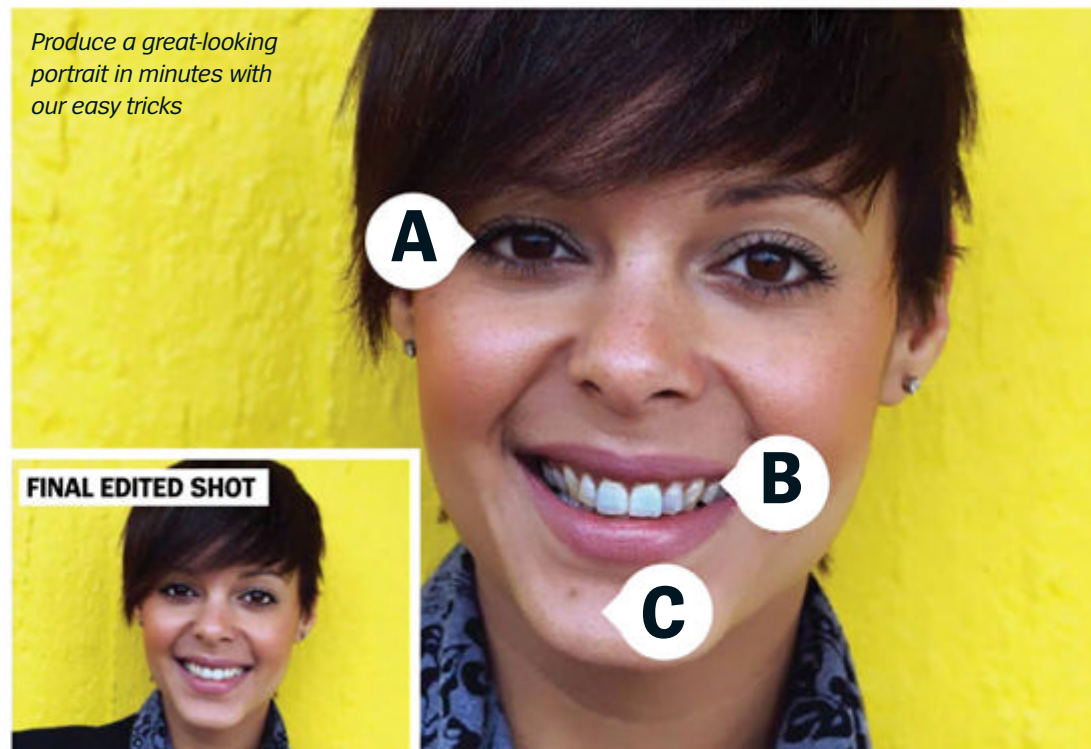
A *The eyes are the window to the soul, so should be perfectly pin-sharp in your photos to show off the details.*

Dull teeth

B *There's no need for expensive teeth whitening treatments, as you can brighten them up with just a few clicks.*

Skin imperfections

C *Getting rid of blemishes couldn't be easier, so you can produce perfect portraits even if you're having a bad skin day.*



Perfect portrait Quick photo fixes in Photoshop Elements



01 Sharpen the eyes

To bring more detail to the eyes, use the Sharpen tool set to 60% Strength. Adjust the brush size and paint over the eyes to banish blur.



02 Remove blemishes

Select the Spot Healing brush and set it to Proximity Match, then click on each skin imperfection and it should vanish instantly.



03 Bright whites

Click the Dodge tool and set the Exposure to around 50%. Now brush over the teeth and the whites of the eyes to add a bit of sparkle.

3 OF THE BEST... Tips for great portrait backdrops



01 Plain and simple

A colourful wall, door or fence will make the perfect backdrop for a portrait. Make sure the colour complements your subject and look for textured surfaces for impact.



02 Stunning vistas

Combine your landscape and portrait skills by shooting your subject against a vista. Make sure the scene isn't too busy, and place your subject off-centre for a more engaging image.



03 Think about foreground

Include interest in the foreground too. Use Aperture Priority mode and use a wide aperture (low f-number), then focus on your subject. This will blur the foreground nicely.

You can usually select manual focus by flicking a switch on your lens



How do I use manual focus?

I have recently bought my first ever DSLR and I am gradually getting to grips with all the settings and features. The next one I would like to have a go with is manual focus, but I have no idea how to use it. I've heard that it's useful for taking close-up photographs of insects and flowers, so can you show me how to use it so that I can take some macro shots?

[Tim Lloyd, Email](#)

Manual focus is a fantastic tool for precise and accurate focusing, but it does require patience to produce perfect results. However, once you've mastered this useful skill, it will come in really handy for all sorts of situations, particularly macro photography. Your camera's autofocus can struggle to lock onto subjects that are really close to the lens, but focusing manually will give it a helping hand. It's also useful in low light if your camera can't find your subject in the dark.

Easy steps to focusing manually

Go manual for more creative shoots



Twist the focus ring

Once manual focus is switched on, twist the focus ring around your lens until you see that your subject appears sharp on the LCD monitor or through the viewfinder.



Use the focus scale

If your lens has a focus scale on the top of it, use it to work out the distance between your subject and the end of your lens, and then select it on the dial.



Check the sharpness

After you have taken your shot, check it on the screen and zoom in to make sure it's sharp. If it isn't, take the time to review your current settings and then try to take your shot again.



Post your photo to our Facebook page and we'll share it with the world
Search for 'PFBMag'



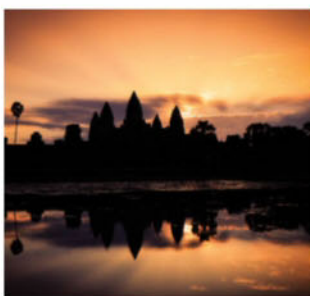
Helen Holmes
Shooting through a glass ball lets you capture a whole new perspective



Ray Mcleod
Maintaining eye contact with your wildlife subject makes for a striking image



Richard Echasseriau
Flour or chalk dust can help you produce a truly atmospheric portrait



Stuart Lilley
Unusually shaped buildings look fantastic when silhouetted against a colourful sky



A striking black-and-white scene has plenty of contrast, texture and atmosphere in it

How can I take better black & white shots?

I've started experimenting with black-and-white photography, but the shots I have taken so far are a little disappointing. They are all a bit flat and dull, and I can't seem to improve them much with editing either. Can you tell me where I'm going wrong?

[Jeremy Walker, Facebook](#)

Converting your shots into black and white is a fantastic way to give them a new lease of life and show the scene in an entirely unique way.

However, not all scenes or subjects lend themselves to this kind of photography. A great way to tell if a scene will look good without colour is to switch on an in-camera monochrome filter, which many cameras now have. This will enable you to preview the effect, and then you can take the shot in colour and convert it yourself later for more control.

If you have the option to shoot in RAW, this will give you even more control when editing your shot, as you can really work with the tones in the image.

Shoot stunning monochromes Capture an interesting image without colour



Look for contrast

A scene with lots of different colour tones, shadows and highlights will look really striking in black and white. For example, cloudy skies make for particularly dramatic landscapes.



Pick out textures

Interesting textures, such as bark, fur and rope, look even better without colour. Avoid shooting flat, smooth surfaces because they will just look dull and boring.



Control the grain

For a smooth image, shoot with a low ISO value. However, if you want to achieve a more gritty, atmospheric shot, increase the value to create a bit of grain.

Get to know your camera in 5 minutes

Your quick-start guide to help you master your kit now

CAMERA ICONS EXPLAINED

Choose the correct setting with this guide

- Delete – found on all cameras
- Drive modes, including Burst
- Self-timer for self-portraits
- Playback – use to review photos
- Metering modes
- Image stabilisation
- Flash – choose to switch on/off
- W** Zooms lens out for wide-angles
- Fn** Function button – for shortcuts
- Flash off – the flash won't fire
- T** Zooms lens in for close-ups
- Diameter of lens – found on barrel
- Macro or close-up modes
- Zoom in on your photos
- Exposure compensation
- Video mode on stills cameras
- Zoom out of your photos
- Night-time/low-light scenes

Program

Easily customise things like ISO and white balance

Landscape

Boosts the saturation in blues and greens for really vivid shots

Auto

Let your camera do the hard work for you in Automatic mode

Sports

Uses a fast shutter speed to capture blur-free movement

Aperture Priority

Select the aperture while the camera picks the shutter speed for you

Shutter Priority

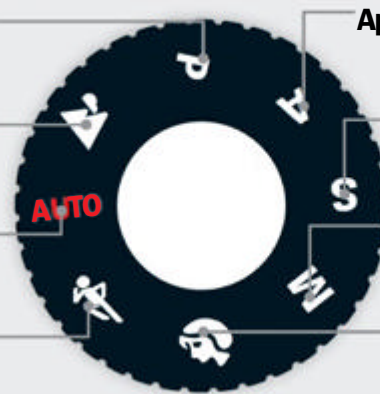
Select just the shutter speed in this mode

Manual

Take control in this mode and pick your own settings

Portrait

For super-flattering people shots with blurry backgrounds



Change your lens

How to remove and attach lenses



Remove the lens

01 Remove the old lens by pressing the button next to it and then gently twisting the lens anti-clockwise to unscrew it.



Line it up

02 Remove the new lens's rear cap and then line up the red or white markings on the lens and camera body.



Fix in place

03 Once lined up, twist the lens clockwise until you hear a click telling you that it has locked into place.

JARGON BUSTER

Aperture: Affects the amount of your image that is in focus – the 'depth of field'

CSC: Compact System Camera

DSLR: Digital single-lens reflex camera

Drive mode: Continuous or Burst mode, single shot and self-timer

Dynamic range: The term used to refer to the amount of detail present in the highlights and shadows

Exposure: A balanced exposure has detail in light and shadow areas alike

Exposure compensation: Adjusts the tonal range of your photo, lighter or darker

Focal lengths: Wide-angle – a wider-angle of view than normal, eg 28mm. Telephoto – a magnified view of subjects in the distance, such as 200mm

Focus: Autofocus means your camera focuses for you; Manual puts you in control

ISO: Refers to how sensitive your camera's sensor is to light. ISO also affects the visible grain, or 'noise', in a photo

LCD: The display screen on the rear of the camera used to compose images

Live View: An electronic view of the scene in front of the lens

Metering: Refers to the way the camera reads the light in the scene

Megapixels: Number of pixels on the sensor, in millions

Noise: Refers to the visible digital grain in a photograph

Shutter speed: Fast speeds freeze action, while longer ones blur any motion

Viewfinder: Optical – shows you the view through the camera lens and is good for accurate framing. Electronic – shows the view on an LCD in the viewfinder

White balance: Affected by the ambient light, the white balance can be altered to ensure a natural colour result

Zoom: Optical – the magnification provided by the camera lens. Digital – a camera crop factor

UPGRADE

Olympus PEN E-PL7

The little camera that's big on features

£350/\$600 (body only) | 16 megapixels | Wi-Fi | Manual modes

**BUY
THIS IF...**
You're style-savvy
but want to shoot
stunning shots
on the go



IS THIS A GOOD CAMERA FOR BLOGGING?

Your photos are ready to share as soon as they're captured, thanks to the built-in Wi-Fi. There is also a host of creative filters available, a tilting LCD for selfies and Full HD video, making it well suited to social media mavens.

UPGRADE Olympus PEN E-PL7



Left

Lens swap

There are a variety of lenses available so you can swap and change to suit your subject

Right

Creative angles

The tilting LCD helps you to compose dramatic low and high-angled shots. You can also choose from a treasure trove of creative effects



Dressed for all occasions

There is an exposure mode to suit every scene you're faced with. Automatic modes like scene and iAuto produce true-to-life results

Chic and sophisticated, the Olympus PEN E-PL7 is shooting squarely for the fashion-conscious photographer. The slim design would make it the perfect handbag accessory, and the retro-inspired design is right on trend. It's not all style and no substance, however, as it packs a large 16.1-megapixel sensor that captures a lot of detail.

Colours are accurately rendered and images are sharp even in low light, all the way up to ISO 6400. However, there is no built-in flash to add light to darker scenes, but if you spend more (£400/\$700), then it comes with the 14-42mm kit lens and an external flash, which is great value for money.

You'll find the full range of automatic and manual modes on board, and it's straightforward to adjust the settings via the control dial. There is also a touchscreen display for fast focusing – simply tap on the subject. It doesn't matter what the subject is either, as the E-PL7 can handle just about anything. There are a whopping 25 scene modes and a plenty of creative modes, from Instagram-style filters to miniature effects. Speaking of social networking, it

comes with Wi-Fi for uploading your shots on the go, which is great news for the Twitterati.

Far from flawless, this model can be a little high maintenance. Before you can switch it on, you have to manually extend the lens and then press the power button, which slows down the process and could result in missed photo opportunities. It also lacks an electronic viewfinder so all your shots must be composed using the LCD. This is the tilting variety, which means you can take self-portraits, as well as capture high and low angles more easily. The only downside is that it tilts downwards, so it's not possible to use a tripod at the same time.

Niggles aside, this is a great option for everyday use and, despite the female target audience implied by the website, it will appeal to men also.

This stylish and portable camera has all the functionality of a DSLR, with quality images to match. Most will miss a built-in flash, though

VERDICT ★★★★★

TECHNICAL INFO

Megapixels 16.1MP

Plenty of megapixels for printing big and retaining detail

Zoom By lens

The 14-42mm kit lens gives plenty of scope for landscapes and portraits

Shutter speed 1/4000-60sec

You can capture long exposure effects with the slow shutter speed on offer

ISO sensitivity 200-25600

A broad range of sensitivity settings for stunning low-light shots

Exp. modes 25 scenes, plus Auto, Program, Manual, AP and SP

These modes are good for beginners and more advanced users

Aperture By lens

Flash modes A, M, RE, SS, Fon, Foff

Weight 357g with battery

Dimensions 114.9 x 67 x 38.4mm

Batteries Li-ion

Storage SD, SDHC, SDXC, UHS-I

Screen 3 inches

HOW GOOD IS IT FOR...

Landscapes ★★★★★

Good colour rendition but images are a little dull in cloudy conditions

Portraits ★★★★★

The camera creates beautifully blurred backgrounds for professional portraits

Sports ★★★★★

Fast-moving subjects can end up a little blurred, even in Sports mode

Low light ★★★★★

Night Scene mode combines several shots for the best results

Macro ★★★★★

Macro mode works well to record punchy colour and detail

THE PROS & CONS

✓ The 16.1MP sensor produces powerfully detailed images

✓ There are a variety of creative effects

✗ There is no built-in flash

✗ Switching the camera on is laborious

UPGRADE
Fujifilm X30

Fujifilm X30

The premium compact that shoots like a DSLR

£480/\$600 | 12MP | 13 Art filters | Wi-Fi

BUY THIS IF...
you're a creative type looking for a well-equipped compact



CAN THIS CAMERA HELP ME TAKE ARTY SHOTS?

As well as a range of in-camera effects, such as toy camera and partial colour, the X30 also features Film Simulation modes that re-create the monochrome and colour styles of some of Fujifilm's popular analogue films. You can also share your retro shots instantly via Wi-Fi.

Left

Retro looks

The stylish faux-leather effect gives the camera a vintage look, and the grip provides a secure hold when shooting

Right

Buttons galore

There is quick access to all of the camera's useful features via the many, well-labelled buttons on the back



Colour and detail

Images show a natural representation of the scene in any light, with vivid but accurate colours and plenty of detail present in each frame



It may be chunkier than your average compact but the Fujifilm X30 also has a lot more to offer than a basic point-and-shoot. The mode dial features manual options alongside two auto modes, plus you can focus manually too, a feature often reserved for interchangeable lens cameras. The electronic viewfinder is another more advanced feature, and is useful for framing shots when there is glare on the LCD. The tilting monitor display is more useful for creative framing though, as it helps you shoot from high or low angles, but sadly doesn't face forwards for taking self-portraits. Touchscreen functionality is missing too, but there are plenty of buttons and dials for traditional control.

Once you get used to the camera, it is very easy to use. Settings can be changed quickly and easily using the control dial around the lens or smaller dial on the back, and the Q button gives clear access to the most important controls. However, most functions don't come with an explanation, so you may need to read the manual before you can understand what everything does. Even the method for turning the camera on, which is done by twisting

the lens, isn't immediately obvious, but should quickly become second nature.

There are plenty of handy functions to help you take perfect shots with ease though. The exposure compensation dial on top of the camera lets you instantly brighten or darken your shot to correct exposure issues, and Adv mode superimposes several shots together to create one perfect exposure in tricky lighting conditions.

The X30 can focus and shoot quickly and produces outstanding image quality for a compact. Images don't become grainy until ISO 800 and are still useable until ISO 3200, but the wide maximum aperture of the lens captures plenty of light anyway, as well as creating lovely background blur. Although other compacts have bigger sensors and zooms, the X30 has plenty to keep beginners occupied.

The retro-styled X30 has a lot to offer for a reasonable price. Ideal for beginners not yet ready for an interchangeable lens camera

VERDICT ★★★★★

TECHNICAL INFO

Megapixels 12MP

An average number of megapixels that will produce images big enough to print

Zoom 4x optical, 2x digital

A focal range of 28-112mm is adequate for most shooting scenarios

Shutter speed 30-1/4000sec

A great range for fast-paced action and creative low-light shots

ISO sensitivity 100-12800

Extensive sensitivity range for taking clear shots at night

Exp. modes 14 scenes, plus Auto, Program, Manual, AP and SP

Plenty to offer beginners looking to learn new skills

Aperture f2-2.8

Flash modes A, Fon, Foff, SS, RE, M

Weight 423g with battery

Dimensions 118.7 x 71.6 x 60.3mm

Batteries Li-ion

Storage SD, SDHC, SDXC, 55MBint

Screen 3 inches

HOW GOOD IS IT FOR...

Landscapes ★★★★★

Panorama mode will help you fit entire vistas in the frame

Portraits ★★★★★

Create stylish background blur and apply arty effects for standout portraits

Sports ★★★★★

The limited zoom won't help you get close to the action

Low light ★★★★★

Excellent handheld and tripod-assisted low-light performance

Macro ★★★★★

Macro mode lets you focus from just 1cm away for extreme close ups

THE PROS & CONS

- ✓ Superb image and build quality in general
- ✓ Plenty of useful features for beginners
- ✗ Initially confusing for complete novices
- ✗ Limited zoom and the design feels chunky

Kit bag essentials

Improve your photography with this selection of accessories

1 Earth Explorer NG 2300 Slim Shoulder Bag Price £90/\$90

National Geographic's (www.geographicbags.co.uk) durable everyday bag opens via a sturdy fold-down flap on the front, and this has Velcro pockets on to store quick-access items. Inside, there is a removable zipped and padded insert large enough to hold an entry-level DSLR or mirrorless camera, or a medium zoom lens. You can also store a tablet in a special padded compartment. This roomy carrier

has a thick shoulder strap and carrying handle, solid brass buckles, and is made from environmentally friendly materials.

It's a shame, however, that there's no rain cover. The price is set quite high, but you are paying for the stylish design and high build quality, and it also comes included with a five-year warranty.



01

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC®

2 Manfrotto pocket support Price £15/\$20

When you need to hold your compact camera in a specific position, this metal support from Manfrotto (www.manfrotto.com) is a space-saving way to provide stability. It fits using the standard tripod attachment screw, and because it's less than one-centimetre high when folded, you can keep it on the camera even when you're not using it, but you do have to unmount it if

you want to access the camera's battery compartment. The three legs are easily folded out, and they have rubber feet for gripping different surfaces. As long as your camera weighs less than 600g, this tiny support is incredibly handy. It's worth buying for times when you don't want the weight of a tripod.



3 ExpoDisc 2.0 White balance filter Price £40/\$50

This white balance filter from Expomaging (www.expomaging.com) is useful for quickly setting a white balance for photos. You place the ExpoDisc in front of your lens and capture the light while setting your camera's custom white balance, and this takes no longer than a few seconds. Every filter is tested by hand to ensure that the product is correctly calibrated, and the results were

impressive in artificial and natural light. This is a great tool to save you time editing your images. It isn't in any way stylish, and the plastic casing feels cheap. It does however, come with two warming filters (gels), to add varying degrees of warmth for attractive skin tones. It's a useful tool for its price.



Photography for beginners

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4 Lensbaby LM-10

Price **£60/\$70**

If you want to explore some new
effects with your smartphone
camera, then this Sweet Spot lens
from Lensbaby (www.lensbaby.com)
is a good way to add interest. You
can use the lens to create images
that have an attractive single spot of
focus, which is surrounded by blur.
There's also a free app that gives
you extra control over exposure,
composition and a variety of digital
filters. You can use the lens with
iPhones and most Android
smartphones, and it mounts quickly
to the ring surrounding the phone's
lens using the included magnets.
Overall, the image quality is good,
and works well for close-up subjects
such as flowers. This is a novelty,
but still fairly inexpensive phone
camera accessory.



02

03

04

CREATE THE IMPOSSIBLE

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk

60 MINUTES OF VIDEO TUITION! VALUED AT £158
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GRASP THE PEN TOOL

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PLUS! 14 pages of beginners' tutorials
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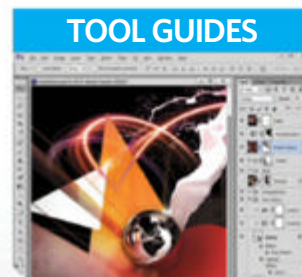
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